I hope you are all enjoying a wonderful summer and are experiencing the rejuvenation we all need to support in our work.

This edition of Group Assets features an article by Christine Fitzstevens, LCSW-R, CGP, where she shares her experience of organizing an event in the Rochester Area in partnership with the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health. The event featured Elizabeth Ford, MD, a psychiatrist who wrote a book entitled Sometimes Amazing Things Happen: Breakthrough and Heartbreak on the Bellevue Hospital Psychiatric Prison Ward. The book chronicles her experiences in working with individuals with mental illness in the criminal justice system at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. This is a population that is underserved and often forgotten when we talk about the use of group psychotherapy in public settings. I applaud Christine for organizing this event and bringing this important issue out of the shadows, giving it the attention that it needs. I was inspired when talking with Christine about this event, and I know you will be inspired when you read her article.

The Faces of Our Foundation for this issue highlights my dear friend and colleague Barbara Squire Ilfeld, MSN, RNCS, FAGPA, CGP-R. Barbara and her husband Fred have been generous supporters of the Group Foundation in many ways. Barbara has served on the Group Foundation Board of Directors for 14 years (and counting!) and both she and Fred have been dedicated to the training and teaching of group psychotherapy nationally and locally. Barbara shares with you what has kept her committed to the Group Foundation over the years and what she looks forward to in the future.

I want to thank Christine and Barbara for their time and thoughtfulness in writing their articles for our newsletter and sharing their perspectives.

Sometimes Amazing Things Happen
Christine Fitzstevens, LCSW-R, CGP

Earlier in May, the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health, Westfall Associates, a chemical dependency treatment center, OWN Rochester, a non-profit dedicated to creating worker-owned businesses in Rochester, and the Rochester Area Group Psychotherapy Society, sponsored Sometimes Amazing Things Happen, a fundraising event examining the issue of incarceration and mental health and the school to prison pipeline. Roughly 2.2 million people are incarcerated in the United States, and African Americans are incarcerated at rates five times higher than that of whites. Elizabeth Ford, MD, psychiatrist and author of Sometimes Amazing Things Happen, spoke about her book, which chronicles her experience of heartbreak and hope on the Bellevue Hospital Psychiatric prison ward. Dr. Ford is a stunning example of the potential for one human being to impact an entire bureaucratic system. She is the first woman (and mother) to become the Chief of Psychiatry for Correctional Health Services for New York City’s Health + Hospitals and is responsible for the mental health care of men and women incarcerated in the New York City jail, including those on Rikers Island.

Dr. Ford is also an Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry at New York University School of Medicine and teaches and writes extensively about a broad array of topics related to the interface of mental health, law, and correctional settings, including the mental health impact of incarceration. She has authored and co-authored numerous academic articles and books, including a textbook about significant U.S. legal cases related to psychiatry and the law and the latest edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s guidelines regarding psychiatric services in jails and prisons.

To connect the audience to this issue locally, the event planning team invited local speakers: Bita Adams, a poet from the Teaching and Learning Institute at East High School; Craig Waled, PhD, a professor at Brockport University who spoke on his research and dissertation entitled Aspects of Emotional Intelligence that Help Former Prisoners Make Decisions to D vive Crime; and Danielle Ponder, Esq., a lawyer, activist, and artist working on criminal justice reform.

I have been a Board member of the Group Foundation for several years and frankly, I hate asking for money. It’s more fun for me to throw a party and raise funds through ticket sales. This event combined many goals of the Foundation: 1) harnessing inspiration from colleagues in the field who are willing to publicly share their work; 2) model group therapy with a demonstration group in the here-and-now; 3) generating compelling dialogue on issues of social justice; and 4) inviting attendees to consider applying for scholarships to AGPA Connect 2020. And let’s not forget another important part of the missions: exquisite food, drink, and a jazz trio with impromptu vocals. Now we’re talking!

I was struck by the variety of fields represented amongst the 120 in attend ance. In addition to mental health professionals of all kinds, attendees were from the probation department, sheriff’s department, forensic psychiatry, chemical dependency agencies, non-profits working with incarcerated persons or their families, employees from local shelters, hospital nurses, city government employees, and community activist groups. Many urban teachers were among those inspired by Dr. Ford’s words and were struck by the similarities between her experience and their own in the school setting.

Bita Adams passionately recited a poem she had written about social injustice. After her reading, Dr. Ford told us that Adams was life changing. Danielle Ponder spoke of her work in the courts, the frustrations and difficulties, and then offered a song she had written, a capella; a loud silence fell over the room. Craig Waled shared research from his doctorate on the community to prison pipeline, along with his own story of recovery from incarceration in the 1990s. A theme threaded throughout was that it matters how we speak with each other. The demonstration group that followed included a woman with profound, cutting-edge, and sometimes funny and touching stories, and particularly enjoyable, meaningful and productive were the music sessions, where participants would find each other with ideas on how to reach out to the greater community to finan cially support the work of the AGPA.

Two of my most rewarding involvements are our donations to the Foundation’s Scholarship Fund and my mentoring of new group therapy professionals. Our new professionals are the future of the AGPA, ensuring the longevity and ongoing leadership of our organization. I love doing my part to keep our AGPA family thriving while our new members and leaders grow into our community.

**THE FACES OF OUR FOUNDATION**

**Inspiration for Giving to My AGPA Family**

Barbara Squire Ilfeld, MSN, RNCS, FAGPA, CGP-R

For 30 years, along with my husband Fred Ilfeld, MD, I have donated financially to the well-being and thriving of the AGPA through the Group Foundation. In addition, for 14 years I have contributed my time serving on the Group Foundation Board of Directors. The Group Foundation inspires me in so many ways to continue giving as it supports the work of the AGPA: educating group therapists through AGPA Connect; offering online and other educational events; providing scholarships for students and early professionals to AGPA Connect; providing outreach throughout the world in times of natural or man-made disasters; and supplying monies for valuable research projects.

The AGPA has become my professional family to which I feel a strong allegiance and for which I have a deep passion. I am grateful to have the resources and time to give back to the organization that has nurtured me for 30 years. I want to see my AGPA family thrive so other professionals can benefit as I certainly have from all that it has to offer.

Whether it is talking to the many scholarship recipients at AGPA Connect or feeling a deep sense of pride when I tell people about the amazing things the AGPA does in our world as a result of funding from the Group Founda tion, I am thrilled to be part of a team that helps make it all happen—our Group Foundation Board. I continually learn from and am inspired by our team, an impressive group of professionals who share ideas, expertise, and compassion, at face-to-face meetings, phone conference calls, and particularly enjoyable, meaningful and productive retreats, where we simulate each other with ideas on how to reach out to the greater community to financially support the work of the AGPA.

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**LEGACY SOCIETY**

We appreciate the provisions these planned gift donors have made for the Group Foundation.

Ramon Alonso
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Jan Morris
Joseph & Matt Pasternak
Keith Rand & John D’Amico
Kathy Reedy
Joseph Shay & Laura Zimmerman
Lorraine Wodiska
Elliot Zeisel & Mary Susanillo

**CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE**
When I think about the experience I remember attendees: empathy, authenticity, and generosity were trauma in their histories. Her transparency and group work, especially when working treatment for ourselves including individual mental health and group provides the death, and decay outside her window. What to someone through a gift to the Group Foundation for psychotherapy.

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The day was full of information and network in a variety of ways. Suitable entries include doctoral dissertations, videos, published papers, and other creative contributions. The Aaron Stein Memorial Fund

In conclusion, I invite you to consider hosting a gift to benefit the community, particularly in non-psychotherapy settings.

A spectacular reception with convivial conver- ing. Lots of great people coming from differenting about psychodynamic group theory. Individuals may qualify

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